

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

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De Havilland DHC-8 Makes Its First Flight

De Havilland Aircraft of Canada's first preproduction 36-passenger DHC-8 commuter/corporate aircraft flew for the first time last week at Downsview, Ont. The aircraft, shown during the 90-min. flight, was piloted by Robert Fowler and Adam Saunders. The test flight included longitudinal static testing, sideslips, skids and asymmetric thrust

examinations. The June 20 flight was 10 days ahead of the original flight date, which was scheduled for June 30. Rollout of the aircraft was Apr. 19 (AW&ST Apr. 25, p. 31). The first flight marked the beginning of a five-aircraft, 1,600-hr. certification program scheduled to be completed in August, 1984. Orders stand at 53.

Air Transport

Traffic Rises in California Corridor

Passenger volume shows increases on the heavily traveled San Francisco-Los Angeles route while fares remain stable

By Anne Randolph

Los Angeles—The high-volume Los Angeles-San Francisco corridor is experiencing an increase in passenger volume and a relatively stable fare environment, a significant change from the situation a year ago.

Almost 2 million passengers flew between the two cities in 1982, according to the Civil Aeronautics Board. The corridor is approximately 337 mi. long. The upturn in passenger volume this year, which airline officials agree began during the second quarter, is believed to be the result of improved economic conditions.

Discount fares and promotional programs were evident along the corridor last summer as airlines tried to stimulate air travel, particularly in the discretionary market (AW&ST Aug. 2, 1982, p. 26). Pacific Southwest, for example, reduced its Los Angeles-San Francisco fare from \$69.49 to \$45.00.

Pacific Southwest has been a fixture on the route, and generates about 12% of its total annual passenger volume on this route. The carrier operates an average of 17 daily departures in each direction.

"The Los Angeles-San Francisco market is probably the most competitive mar-

ket in the country," a Pacific Southwest official said, "and it is a very heavy business market." Pacific Southwest is not planning any fare changes on its Los Angeles-San Francisco service and will continue to promote flight frequency in addition to ticket prices.

The airline's lowest one-way fare between the two cities is the \$30 Midnight Flyer. The discount, issued on standby basis, applies to designated late night flights. Standard coach fare is \$55.

Two other carriers with high-frequency schedules between Los Angeles and San Francisco are United Airlines and AirCal. United, utilizing Boeing 732s, offers an average of 16 daily departures in each direction. AirCal flies Boeing 737s and McDonnell Douglas DC-9 Super 80s to provide 17 average daily departures each way. The discount one-way fare charged by both carriers between Los Angeles and San Francisco is \$55. Officials at United and at AirCal said there was little likelihood the fare would be discounted this summer.

AirCal began nonstop service between Los Angeles International and San Francisco in December, 1982. Prior to that

time, the carrier concentrated on developing business from John Wayne Airport in Orange County southeast of Los Angeles.

Pan American, Delta, Trans World, Republic, Western and Chico, Calif.-based Pacific Express also operate between the city pair but with less frequency and, in some instances, lower fares than Pacific Southwest, United and AirCal.

Pan American, Delta and Trans World have one-way coach fares of \$35. Western and Republic are not expected to reduce their \$55 fare unless market conditions change significantly.

Pacific Express recently cut its one-way coach fare on the Los Angeles-San Francisco corridor to \$39 from \$45. But the move was initiated to maintain the airline's visibility in the California marketplace and bolster load factors on established Los Angeles-San Francisco service, according to Pacific Express' senior marketing vice president, Fred R. Davis. "The market is an incremental one for us," Davis said. "We did not expect a major response by other airlines."

Davis said a market study conducted for Pacific Express in the late 1970s indicated that the Los Angeles-San Francisco corridor could support a maximum of four scheduled air carriers providing hourly service in each direction. Pacific Southwest and AirCal operate an average of 17